

Town Manager's Report - Week of: 11/17/2017



Town Manager's Office:

- I'm happy to report that last night I officially submitted the Cleanup Grant to the EPA for the Tannery. This was a major endeavor and took the better part of a week to compile all the materials for the grant, write the narrative and input data. Thank you to Ransom Consulting and Karen Brace for all your hard work in helping to pull the application together. Typically the EPA announces awards in May or June with funding available in October. Anyone who would like a copy of the application that was submitted is welcome to email me to receive an electronic copy or come in the Town Office for a hard copy.
- I had a very positive meeting with Ben Fowlie and Shannon Herring from Points North Institute which runs ClIFF. They have a lot of exciting ideas on how the town can work with Points North Institute to improve Camden's year round vibrancy and what we can do as a town to support organizations that make Camden a destination and set us apart from other small towns.
- A number of Department Heads and Town staff had our first emergency operations planning meeting this week. A small group of staff from 3 different departments will update the emergency operations plan to bring back to the larger group for review. Once the plan has been updated a drill will be held to see how well the draft plan works when implemented. The group also discussed the need for the Town to recruit volunteers to help staff an Emergency Operations Center in the event of an emergency. These volunteers are critical in helping to execute a coordinated response to an emergency.
- Since I've started with the Town I've been doing a lot of work evaluating different departments and positions and listening to feedback from staff members and citizens to try and determine the areas where we need to change how we allocate staff resources. This has led me to the point where I've recently had to make a very difficult decision; I have determined that the best way to structure Camden's planning, code enforcement and community & economic development activities is under a Planning & Development Director. This position will be responsible for overseeing the operations and staff in the Planning, Code Enforcement, Development Department and will be directly responsible for the Town's planning and community & economic development activities.

This was a particularly difficult decision to arrive at because in order to fund a Planning and Development Director the Town can no longer fund the Community Development position, currently held by Karen Brace. I greatly appreciate the work that Karen has done for the Town of Camden. You will be hard pressed to find anyone who loves this community more than Karen. I also appreciate her willingness to stay on with the Town while we make this transition.

Fire Department

- Continuing review of Code Enforcement educational materials

- Held a monthly Department meeting
 - Given an increase of Carbon Monoxide responses we reviewed our CO response Standard Operating Guideline
 - Educated personnel on a newly developed Accident & Injury Reporting SOG
 - Reviewed Lessons Learned during the storm response of Oct 30, 2017
 - Identified the need to develop an SOG for response of Emergency Vehicles during Hurricanes and Tropical Storms
- Concluded a Basic Pump Operators Course for our personnel
- Continued our maintenance program to upkeep apparatus & equipment
- Assisted the Town Clerk with hosting the elections in the apparatus bay of the Public Safety Building
- Continued our fire safety art contest at CRMS
- Begin preparations to update the town's Emergency Operations Plan
- Conducted a live fire training exercise using a building located at 50 Gillette Road
 - The building belonged to the Coastal Mountain Land Trust and was used at their request
 - Coordinated the training with Maine Forest Rangers and the Hope Fire Department

Community Development

- The Town of Camden was selected as one of three leading communities to present a segment on “Vibrant Downtowns” at the Annual Meeting of the Retail Association of Maine in Portland on November 2nd. Camden’s Community Development Director spoke along with those in similar roles from Freeport and Gardiner.
- On December 6th at 8am, the second “Connect over Coffee” gathering for downtown businesspeople will be held at the Camden Falls Gallery on the Public Landing. Connect Over Coffee offers a forum for dialogue and fosters connections to strengthen Camden’s business community. The events are held on the first Wednesday of each month. Since the open houses take place at a different location each time, they offer the opportunity for the host to show their space and gain exposure for their business. We also anticipate that increased familiarity among downtown retailers of neighboring shops may increase referrals.
- The first Connect Over Coffee gathering, held on the November 1st, was attended by retailers and downtown businesspeople, members of the Select Board and the Downtown Economic Vitality Team. Several retailers who attended the event expressed their feeling that the 2017 summer and fall seasons in Camden had been successful, and there were also concerns shared about downtown vitality.
- The Community and Economic Development Committee (CEDAC) is defining goals for high-speed internet coverage, an important factor in attracting businesses. At CEDAC’s most recent

meeting, members looked at Camden's existing fiber network and discussed how to approach reaching areas that are currently underserved. Target groups that require service, in addition to those who are currently serviced by high-speed internet, are remote workers and small businesspeople operating out of their homes. CEDAC will be working with the private sector to refine options for expanding our town's broadband coverage.

- The December 9th Second Saturday program will be an Inns Open House. The public is invited for tours at the participating hotels and B&Bs. The locations will be decorated for the holidays and will offer samples of a favorite recipe that they serve to their guests. The theme for Camden's November Second Saturday program was "Honor Our Veterans." Four local bed and breakfasts offered free stays for veterans on Veteran's Day weekend. Activities on Saturday, November 11th included a ceremony at noontime at the Village Green and an afternoon of music, refreshments and stories at the American Legion Hall.

Harbor

- Two estimates for the repair of the public launch ramp were pursued after the last storm damaged the concrete ramp. All vessels are winterized and stored for the winter. All seasonal infrastructure has been extracted from the water. Investigation has begun on how we can add a public shower and laundry for visiting vessels at the existing public bathroom facility.
- The emergency vessel for the winter months will be a 15' hard bottom inflatable and the vessel "GladysWink"

Opera House

- We are extremely busy getting ready for holiday season!
- Jonathan Edwards concert early November was extremely well received – good, grateful audience (standing ovation) and in Jonathan's own words (and he's been performing for 40 years) "your staff made me sound the best I've sounded – ever". Huge Kudos to Dave Morrison and Mike Whitehead. Dave also worked on the elections set up and break down.
- The Pecha Kucha last Friday had every seat in the house filled for an extremely interesting program. They come every November.
- I attended a directors conference this fall, and one contact I made was the new director at Maine Opera in Portland. (formerly Port Opera). She is now discussing a date with me to bring a small work to our OPERA house☺
- We are selling tickets like mad and our ticket vendor, TicketBiscuit, which was recently purchased by Etix has unfortunately not been keeping up as well as we'd like. I have reviewed our concerns with their call center and will also with the new management, and in the meantime have tweaked and streamlined the current system to ensure it is as user friendly for ticket purchases as possible with the existing software.
- We are updating our website for 2018.
- Holiday decorations will start to appear next week – this year we are even decorating the stage for the Natalie MacMaster Celtic Christmas show.

- Lots of films this month – last in this year’s CIFF Selects series (monthly highly curated award winning docs we present in partnership with CIFF) promises to be well attended, with the director in attendance, then fundraising movie for Ragged Mtn (*Rogue Elements*) this Saturday and first Winter Family Fun Film (*Tangled*) on Sunday. Thanks to Marc Ratner and Opera House Committee members esp Beth O’Connor for spearheading, and Camden National Bank for sponsoring.
- Dave and I and then Audra will be meeting on capital needs – most critical currently is to replace the Tucker Room curtains which have gone from slightly frayed quite quickly to badly frayed.
- Speaking of the Tucker Room, Carey Cameron, a daughter of Kay Tucker, attended an event here last week and was delighted to see that we remember her mother in our slideshow. We will be meeting for lunch soon to reminisce about Kay and discuss a few ideas on how to perpetuate her legacy.
- Preparations for the Natalie MacMaster show include hospitality for 17 people (lunch and dinner – and for one with a peanut allergy), parking for a tour bus, hiring a photographer to document such a large event, huge backline and tech set up, and taking weather insurance – just in case we get too much white stuff the day of the show!!